

THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION



LA LÉGION ROYALE CANADIENNE

THE PRESIDENT

LE PRÉSIDENT

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OTTAWA, ONTARIO K2L 0A1

23 February 2011

File No.: 29-1

The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn  
Minister of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Affairs Canada  
66 Slater Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0P4

Dear Minister Blackburn,

Having reviewed your letter of 10 February, 2011 on Funeral and Burial Benefits, we are surprised by continuing delays in resolving this priority issue.

There should be no doubt that this is an urgent issue for WWII and Korean War Veterans who are in their 80s, and about 2000 of which are dying each month. The new Veterans' Ombudsman has already indicated at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) on 17 February 2011 that he intends "to pursue the recommendations already made to the Minister regarding funeral and burial expenses" as a priority. There should also be no doubt that this is an urgent priority for The Royal Canadian Legion and other Veterans organizations.

We are surprised, if not shocked, that some of the corrective measures you have introduced are to spend precious funding on hiring additional communications staff and developing a joint communications committee while ignoring the substantive shortcomings in funding of Funeral and Burial expenses when compared to customary expenses for such services.

In view of the lack of timely action by the Government, we will continue to do our utmost to make our views known to the Canadian public by whatever means.

With very best regards,

Patricia (Pat) Varga  
Dominion President